

The Globalization of Sport and the Mass-Mediated Identity of Hines Ward in South Korea

Jong Woo Jun

Dan-Kook University

Hyung Min Lee

Sungshin Women's University

In 2006, Hines Ward, a Korean-American athlete, was at the center of the media spotlights and became a national celebrity in South Korea after he was named the Most Valuable Player of Super Bowl XL. This paper examines the role of local journalists as cultural intermediaries and the repercussions of the mass-mediated identity of Hines Ward created and reproduced in the media. In light of the globalization of sport, this case study increases our understanding of how the globalization of sport has influenced and transformed the ways in which national identity is defined and conceptualized and how identities of cross-national athletes are crafted, disseminated, and marketed by local cultural intermediaries, particularly journalists.

The globalization of sport has been viewed as a centripetal force that menaces indigenous sport cultures and dissolves identities built and maintained around shared sport experiences at a local level (Martin-Barbero, 2002; Washington & Karen, 2001). As the globalization of sport has been frequently explicated and theorized within the context of global and local tensions (Andrews & Ritzer, 2007; Cho, 2009), many scholarly debates have focused on the extent to which the globalization of sport has influenced and transformed today's sport identities—identities of athletes, identities of sport communities, and identities of sport fans—and how the tensions between the globalization of sport and local adjustments have been displayed across various types of identification (e.g., Bruce & Wheaton, 2009; Falcous & Silk, 2006; Grainger, 2006). Indeed, global diffusion of sport cultures, constant flow of athletes across national borders, and uniformly broadcast and consumed sport events worldwide have significantly challenged uniquely distinguished and preserved national/local identities and, as a result, have created a *mélange* of identities with regard to nations, athletes, and sport fans (Lines, 2000; Rowe, 2003).

In particular, the increasing migration of athletes from one country to another deserves special scholarly attention to more systematically theorize the ways in which their identities are defined, metamorphosed, and played out in the torrential stream of the globalization of sport. The growing tendency of sport migration has

unquestionably demonstrated the global flow of sport capital and deterritorialization of sport economy (Thibault, 2009). However, cross-national athletes are also representative vehicles of citizenship, national identity, and nationalism associated with their respective countries of birth and origin (Rojek, 2006). For that reason, they have been regarded as cultural symbols of the global-local nexus as well as global marketing resources possessing resonant identities with local sport fans (Gladden, Irwin, & Sutton, 2001; Silk & Andrews, 2001).

In 2006, Hines Ward, the Most Valuable Player of Super Bowl XL, had garnered unusual media attention and public popularity in South Korea, where people are not much interested in American football and broadcast of the National Football League (NFL) games is very scarce (Lee, 2006). Hines Ward has mixed Korean/American parentage and is arguably one of the few successful American football athletes with Asian heritage. In addition, the fact that he overcame some hardships in life, including living in poverty under a single Korean mother in the United States and allegedly being discriminated against by people in both countries due to his racial mixture (Beith, 2006), made perfect newsworthiness drawing the media's attention. When he visited South Korea with his mother, he was treated as a national sport hero, and his first news conference held during the visit saw over 200 reporters and photographers in attendance (Wiseman, 2006).

Building on this intriguing as well as unique case, this paper examines the context of the Hines Ward syndrome in South Korea with specific focus on why local journalists so eagerly covered Hines Ward; how they constructed and framed his national identity; and how the mass-mediated identity of Hines Ward resonated with

Jun is with the Dept. of Communication and Media Studies, Dan-Kook University, Yong-In, Republic of Korea. Lee is with the Dept. of Media Communication, Sungshin Women's University, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

local audiences and fans; and what outcomes the Hines Ward syndrome yielded. In addition, the implications of the Hines Ward syndrome in South Korea are discussed, specifically focusing on the influence of the globalization of sport on national identity and identification and the role of local journalists as cultural intermediaries.

Rearticulation of the Global and the Local

In recent years, the predominant conceptualization of the globalization of sport as a dialectic adjustment between the global and the local has been challenged and rearticulated by many scholars (e.g., Amis & Silk, 2010; Morley & Robins, 1995; Ritzer, 2004). For instance, Andrews and Ritzer (2007) postulated that simply focusing on how the globalization of sport has influenced sport manifestations, structures, practices, and marketing at a local level may no longer yield fruitful insights into the body of knowledge. Almost no local sporting enclaves are completely independent of the globalization of sport and, indeed, today's constant penetration of the global into the local has already resulted in a great deal of integration and hybridization of the two at a local level. What has been considered the local appears to be no longer a peculiar and unique entity; rather, it may be already in a form of the global as a consequence of the interplay between the global and the local (Andrews & Ritzer, 2007). To more clearly theorize the current dynamic relationships between the global and the local, they further suggested the idea of the *glocal*, where the globalization of sport overwhelmingly destroys and exterminates local sport infrastructures in favor of imperialistic and capitalistic needs and desires, as the counterpart of the *glocal*.

Meanwhile, what has been consistently regarded as the central source of tensions between the global and the local are nations; more precisely, geographically, historically, and culturally defined and demarcated localities and accompanied national identities imagined and shared by citizens. Nations have offered political, social, and cultural references that differentiate and distinguish their own characteristics and styles against the universalization of particularism deriving from the globalization of sport (Lechner, 2007; Rowe, 2003). Nations have played a significant role as strongholds that defend any hegemonic takeovers of the globalization of sport, while they have deepened tensions between the globalizing and the globalized (Rowe, 2003). In fact, only a handful of sport cultures have achieved authentically worldwide popularity due in large part to cultural resistance exerted within national territories and subsequent failure of effective local penetration and accommodation (Eriksen, 2007). These action-reaction processes stemming from the globalization of sport have stirred more intense evocation of nationalism on many occasions. As Rowe (2003) explained, "sport operates as a perpetual reminder of the social limits to the reconfiguration of endlessly mutable identities and identifications" (p. 286).

The Globalization of Sport and the Intricacy of Cross-National Athletes' Identities

The ways in which individuals or communities deliberate, prescribe, and internalize their identities through sport experiences have become increasingly complicated in line with the globalization of sport, which is often characterized by deterritorialization and hybridization (Martin-Barbero, 2002). In particular, cross-national athletes as products of the globalization of sport have added more complexity to national identity and identification processes. Transcending national and cultural borders, cross-national athletes exemplify the growing exchanges and flows of sport capital across different locales and markets (Bryant, 1993; Thibault, 2009). Along this line, cross-national athletes are regarded as symbolized brands that play as ambassadors mediating the globalization of sport and local adjustments (Darnell & Sparks, 2007; Shuart, 2007; Stone, Joseph, & Jones, 2003).

What is perhaps most considerable in conceptualizing and theorizing implications of cross-national athletes in relation to the globalization of sport is their multiple, flexible, and oftentimes mutable identities. On the one hand, cross-national athletes are walking evidence of the globalization of sport representing global citizenship and identity. Their borderless identities largely in association with global visibility and popularity are testimonial outcomes of market de-regulation, deterritorialization, and hybridization that have defined and characterized the globalization of sport (Chiba, Ebihara, & Morino, 2001; Yu, 2005). On the other hand, it is still their unique and inherent national identities that make them local sport celebrities admired and cherished through nationalism and a sense of community. On many occasions, cross-national athletes are referred to as national delegates to global competitions, vying for national superiority and pride (Lines, 2000; Nakamura, 2005).

Taking into account Andrews and Ritzer's (2007) argument, it appears that identities of cross-national athletes can be more instructively and insightfully understood within the *glocal-glocal* theoretical framework. In fact, evident examples of the *glocal* and the *glocal* abound among cross-national athletes. On the one hand, we have seen a number of globalized cross-national athletes with global appeal and worldwide reputation, such as David Beckham, Michael Jordan, and Tiger Woods. Their identities have been strategically framed and used in favor of imperialistic and capitalistic purposes of many sport organizations and corporations that strive for the universalization of sport markets. On the other hand, many cross-national athletes are still recognized with their unique national identities, such as Wayne Gretzky, Yao Ming, and Ichiro Suzuki, indicating persistent tensions between the global and the local (for further discussion, see Nakamura, 2005; Wong & Trumper, 2002).

It should be noted, in addition, that the media have played an irreplaceable role in such globalization or

globalization of cross-national athletes. Globally broadcast sport programs have significantly facilitated the universal and simultaneous consumption of sport irrespective of locality (Bellamy, 1993; Jun & Lee, 2007). In such processes, the media often deliberately and strategically grant cross-national athletes cultural meanings and idealized representations, which most likely become their public identities (Braunstein & Zhang, 2005; Lines, 2000; Shuart, 2007). On the other side of the equation, identities of cross-national athletes crafted and circulated by the media allow sport fans to associate and identify themselves with symbolic meanings embedded in such mass-mediated identities (Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007). In fact, fan identification and subsequent commercial opportunities are perhaps the most pursued goals for today's global sport management network that interweaves cross-national athletes, corporations, sport organizations, and the media.

In the following sections, the Hines Ward syndrome in South Korea is analyzed and discussed with specific focus on the interrelationships between cross-national athletes' national identities, sport fan identification, and local journalists as cultural intermediaries that mediate cross-national athletes and local sport fans. First, the historical, political, and economic context of South Korea is briefly reviewed to help readers more clearly understand why the case of Hines Ward in South Korea—where he was extensively covered by the local media and gained public attention and popularity—deserves a scholarly investigation. Second, how and why Hines Ward achieved a status of national sport celebrity in South Korea after Super Bowl XL is discussed with analytic focus on the role of local journalists as cultural intermediaries who create and reproduce Hines Ward's national identity as a socially and culturally marketable commodity. Finally, some of the outcomes that this theorized Hines Ward syndrome yielded in South Korea are identified and discussed.

Background Analysis: The Context of South Korea

The ethnicity of South Korea has remained homogeneous throughout its long history. As a result, the collectivistic idea of the nation, which emphasizes pure Korean blood proliferated from, and protected within, the shared ancestry, has developed and fostered solid ethnic nationalism in South Korea (Lee, 2006). In this light, Shin and Chang (2004) articulated roots and forms of Korean nationalism as follows:

As in Japan, the Korean nation was “racialized” through belief in a common prehistoric origin, producing an intense sense of collective oneness. While ethnicity is generally regarded as a cultural phenomenon based on a common language and history, and race is understood as a collectivity defined by innate and immutable phenotypic and genotypic characteristics, Koreans have long viewed the two

as intertwined. Hence, race has served as a marker that strengthened ethnic identity, which in turn was instrumental in defining the nation. Koreans defined their national identity as “immutable” or “primordial,” based on shared “Korean Blood” (*hyolt'ong*) that is the basis for an ethnically homogeneous and racially distinctive “unitary nation” (*tanil minjok*). Thus race, ethnicity, and nation were conflated. Indeed, the Korean word *minjok*, while most widely used for “nation,” can easily refer to “ethnicity” and “race” as well. (p. 121)

During the colonial times, nationalistic ideologies and sentiments became even stronger among South Koreans against the Japanese imperialistic control. To resist the Japanese assimilation policy, South Koreans more intensely stressed their unique ethnic, racial, cultural, and national heritage and united under “Koreanness” that challenged the colonial force. Even after its independence from the Japanese ruling in 1945, ideologies of anti-imperialism and anticolonialism have reinforced ethnic nationalism in South Korea, and the intensified nationalism, in turn, has fortified citizens' general reluctance to, and resistance against, any external influence that might potentially contaminate or destroy the wholeness of South Korean national identity (Shin & Chang, 2004). This widespread sentiment of ethnic nationalism in South Korea has been particularly pronounced in the government's highly regulated immigration and citizenship policies, which well demonstrate how strictly South Koreans have drawn national boundaries between citizens and foreigners (Lee, Jackson, & Lee, 2007).

The strong nationalism in South Korea, however, has exhibited some signs of modification in recent years. As the nation has recovered from the economic collapse in 1997, which was caused by foreign exchange crises, the South Korean society has undergone extensive economic and social reforms to renovate itself in line with the global capitalism and economy. Conventionally taken-for-granted traditions and customs, including intense nationalistic sentiments, have been under scrutiny to transform the society into a more compatible and open one in accordance with the global economy order (Cho, 2008; Lee et al., 2007). Specifically in regards to sport nationalism, meanings and implications of national identity and citizenship have been subject to reconsideration and redefinition, as sport migrations in and out of the nation have been significantly increasing both in scope and volume. The case of Guus Hiddink, a Dutch soccer coach, who led the South Korean national team to semifinals in the 2002 Korea-Japan soccer World Cup, signified a fundamental shift in the ways in which national identity and citizenship are defined and understood in South Korea (for further review, see Lee et al., 2007). After all, this transitional context of South Korea, where the meanings of nation, national identity, and citizenship have been constantly reconsidered and redefined in association with the globalization of sport, serves to strengthen the case for the Hines Ward syndrome.

Production and Reproduction of National Identity: South Korean Journalists as Cultural Intermediaries

South Korean journalists began covering Hines Ward in a somewhat lukewarm fashion when he was about to play in Super Bowl XL. Media coverage of Hines Ward remained as brief sport news at that time, well reflecting the lack of media and public interest in American football and the NFL.

After Hines Ward was named the MVP of Super Bowl XL due to his outstanding performance, including a decisive touchdown reception in the fourth quarter, South Korean journalists started paying a massive amount of attention to Hines Ward and covering his success story not only as sport news, but also as feature stories and editorials. Media attention to, and public interest in, Hines Ward only increased thereafter.

Hines Ward is drawing a lot of popularity all at once not only in the United States, but also in South Korea after being awarded the MVP of Super Bowl XL. South Korean broadcasting networks began airing special programs of Hines Ward, previously not being on the schedule, and online fan communities of Hines Ward are getting hundreds of new applicants for membership every day. (*Moon-Wha Ilbo*, 2006, para. 5)

Specifically highlighted in news stories was his national identity in association with his Korean mother, Young-Hee Kim, who single-handedly reared Hines Ward in the United States. Hines Ward was described as “Black Korean” (*Kyung-Hyang Shinmun*, 2006, para. 1), “Korean black pearl” (*Donga Ilbo*, 2006, para. 1), and “National pride of Korea” (*Han-Kook Ilbo*, 2006, para. 5) in major daily newspapers. Many news stories focused on his Korean identity, rather than his athletic performance. His Korean identity was often emphasized in association with his Korean mother. By attributing his success to his Korean mother’s upbringing, a number of news stories purposefully highlighted national supremacy and evoked a sense of national pride.

After Super Bowl XL, Hines Ward has become the subject of everyday conversation both in the United States and South Korea with the Pacific in between. American public interests in Super Bowl are exceptionally high. Accordingly, Hines Ward, the Super Bowl MVP, has emerged as a new sport hero in the United States. The public attention to him in South Korea is different from that of the United States, however. It obviously stems from his racial background of being a half-Korean. It is safe to say that Hines Ward now stands at the center of a syndrome in South Korea, given that the media are running stories about Hines Ward and his mother every day, and a number of online fan communities

have been created. We, South Koreans, are deeply moved by the human drama of Hines Ward, who has been handsomely fostered and educated through his Korean mother’s unconditional sacrifice, rather than his fantastic performance as an athlete. Especially, the Korean characters that are tattooed on his arm, meaning “Hines Ward,” strongly stimulate our national bonds. (*Seoul Shinmun*, 2006, para. 1)

The story of Young-Hee Kim, who has nursed Hines Ward as the biggest star in Super Bowl in spite of the language barrier, poverty, and divorce, is tear-provoking. Hines Ward has been proud of being a Korean, tattooing his Korean name on his arm. He publicly acknowledged that he learned commitment, self-sacrifice, and modesty from his mother. He is truly praiseworthy for his great devotion to her. Thanks to his mother’s strong will, passionate affection, and tears she had long endured in the United States, South Korea is treated as the true mother country by Hines Ward. (*Seoul Shinmun*, 2006, para. 4)

In April 2006, he visited South Korea with his mother as a tribute of respect to his half-homeland. During this short sojourn in South Korea, he had a luncheon reception with the President of South Korea, Roh Moo-Hyun; made a public announcement of the inauguration of a nonprofit foundation to financially aid mixed-blood children in South Korea; and received honorary citizenship. South Korean journalists kept chasing him and covering his daily activities during that period.

President Roh invited Hines Ward, the MVP of Super Bowl XL, and his mother, Young-Hee Kim to the Blue House to have a luncheon and congratulate his achievement. At the luncheon, President Roh stated, “You came back as a hero.” Hines Ward appreciated the President’s remark and continuously expressed his love to his mother. President Roh half jokingly said, “If we write down what you have said and done for your mother, it should be a textbook itself.” (*Seoul Shinmun*, 2006, para. 1)

Hines Ward established ‘Hines Ward-Helping Hands’ foundation with \$2.2 million. In addition to \$1.2 million that were donated from South Korean corporations, Hines Ward subscribed his own \$1 million to the fund. The foundation, which will aid education for half-blood children in South Korea, named the scholarship ‘Young-Hee/Ward’ scholarship after Hines Ward and his mother, Young-Hee Kim. (*Kyung-Hyang Shinmun*, 2006, para. 1)

The honorary citizenship granted to Hines Ward is quite noteworthy. Following Guus Hiddink in 2002, Hines Ward was the second beneficiary of the honorary citizenship in four years for his contribution to national pride and glory through sport. As in the case of Guus Hiddink, Hines Ward being inducted as an honorary citizen was extremely rare and remarkable, specifically

given the historical and political context of South Korea characterized by racial homogeneity of the population and the government's discriminative immigration and citizenship policies. Although Hines Ward is a half Korean, he is by all means a foreigner with U.S. citizenship in light of South Korea's long held definition of national identity, which strictly emphasizes pure Korean blood and complete Korean ethnicity.

"I am so impressed," Hines Ward said, after he received the certificate of citizenship and the Medal of Honor. Then, he shed tears, not being able to continue the speech. His mother, Young-Hee Kim also quietly wiped her tears out, watching her son being choked. Hines Ward dried the tears shortly and talked about his pleasure to be reborn as a South Korean citizen with a bright smile. "I was ashamed of being a Korean when I was little, but now I am proud to be a Korean. I think I owe you an apology for feeling ashamed of being a Korean in the past," he stated. He continually expressed his respect and devotion to his mother and his love to South Korea, his half mother country, throughout the ceremony. (*Donga Ilbo*, 2006, para. 2)

The honorary citizenship conferred on Hines Ward evinces a shift in the ways in which South Koreans conceptualize and define national identity. South Korea's ethnic nationalism, which was intensely fostered and reinforced for a long time, has rendered its way of defining national identity very strict and narrow (Lee, 2006; Shin & Chang, 2004). Viewing race, ethnicity, and citizenship as identical components that determine national identity, the government and citizens often politically as well as socially discriminated against mixed-blood people in South Korea, while regarding them as non-Koreans and treating them as foreigners (Jung & Lee, 2007; Lee, Lee, Lee, Ko, & Lee, 2008). In such context, the acceptance and celebration by the media and citizens of half-Korean Hines Ward as a national sport hero exemplified a social shift—from monistic nationalism to pluralistic nationalism—due in part to the increasingly diversified ethnoscape of South Korea. The Hines Ward syndrome, largely stirred by extensive media coverage of his success story, awoke public awareness and social discourse of abolishing the deep-rooted racial discrimination in South Korea as well.

Hines Ward's mother recollected that when growing up, he has got a lot of unkind treatment and discrimination from Korean people. How awful it must be to make her ask him not to get along with Korean friends! In South Korea, where attachment to pure blood is peculiarly strong, racial discrimination and contempt that mixed-blood people have suffered from are beyond imagination. We need to compose-ly ask ourselves why we have been so nonchalant to the agony of identity that mixed-blood people living in this land have endured for so long, while we are so proud of Hines Ward tattooing Korean names in his arm. (*Kyung-Hyang Shinmun*, 2006, para. 2)

In relation to the globalization and commodification of sport, increasingly firm interrelationships between corporations, professional sport teams, cross-national athletes, and media organizations have been well documented (e.g., Amis, 2003; Andrews, 2003; Moor, 2007; Nalapat & Parker, 2005). The role of global sport media organizations, in particular, has been highlighted through the literature, in that they bridge sport producers and consumers internationally and, thus, facilitate commercial transactions of sport commodities on a global scale (Rojek, 2006). Whereas a number of previous studies have investigated the role of global sport media organizations in the globalization of sport, relatively little scholarly attention has been given to the role of local media organizations in constructing and sustaining the global-local nexus of sport.

Specifically in view of the case of Hines Ward in South Korea, the role of local journalists as cultural intermediaries, who collectively and consistently established Hines Ward's national identity that became widely accepted and recognized by the citizens, deserves special scholarly attention. Cultural intermediaries are defined as the groups of people specializing in creating and providing symbolic goods and services that often stimulate contemporary commercial exchanges (Bourdieu, 1984). In principle, they construct and circulate socially and culturally desirable meanings and values for commodities so as to mediate between producers and consumers and, consequently, expedite commercial exchanges (Cronin, 2004). As Negus (2002) described, "cultural intermediaries shape both use values and exchange values, and seek to manage how these values are connected with people's lives through the various techniques of persuasion and marketing and through the construction of markets" (p. 504). In particular, the media people—those who specialize in the production of mass media contents—are regarded as influential cultural intermediaries who guide and shape public perceptions and desires that promote mass consumption of industrialized products (Bruce, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

Without much broadcasting and viewing of the NFL games, due to the lack of public awareness and interest, South Korean journalists initiatively stirred the Hines Ward syndrome by extensive news coverage of him that inspired and triggered nationalistic sentiments among many local audiences and sport fans. In addition, this discussion by these journalists constantly and consistently framed Hines Ward as a successful American football athlete with Korean heritage, a dedicated son to his Korean mother, and a national sport hero (for further review, see Jung & Lee, 2007; Lee et al., 2008). South Korean journalists collectively created and disseminated compatible and resonant symbolic meanings—focusing on his national identity—for Hines Ward. Those symbolic meanings for Hines Ward, in turn, were received and absorbed well by local audiences and, consequently, gave rise to the Hines Ward syndrome in South Korea. In this sense, South Korean journalists played a role of cultural intermediaries, who helped produce and commercialize social and cultural values of Hines Ward through symbolic imageries.

Mediatization, Commodification, and Identification of Hines Ward

As argued above, South Korean journalists played a critical role in the making of the Hines Ward syndrome by infusing constant and consistent symbolic meanings into Hines Ward, such as a Korean athlete accomplishing the American dream and a successful cross-national athlete with Korean identity. Those symbolic meanings infused into Hines Ward were widely publicized and disseminated through media channels and were well received by South Koreans. Particularly responding to his Korean identity discussed and highlighted in a steady stream of news stories, citizens of South Korea enthusiastically lauded him as an established cross-national athlete representing Korean excellence and embraced him as a national sport hero symbolizing Korean pride abroad. Along this process, South Korean journalists collectively operated as cultural intermediaries who created and reproduced marketing and promotional values of Hines Ward through symbolic and cultural imageries. Three noteworthy outcomes that also acted as indicators of the Hines Ward syndrome—resulting from the role of South Korean journalists as cultural intermediaries—are identified in this study: mediatization, commodification, and identification.

The concept of mediatization highlights the increasing extent to which social institutions are dependent on, and influenced by, the media in most modern societies (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Schulz, 2004). With the growing importance of the media as the main source of information and reference, social institutions often adapt to, and function in, societies through mediatization processes (Kepplinger, 2002). Interdependencies between the media and sport have become significantly tight in recent years as well, while sport events and athletes have been frequently subjected to mediatization (Bernstein & Blain, 2002; Blain, 2002; Nalapat & Parker, 2005; Rojek, 2006; Smart, 2007).

Mediatization of Hines Ward in South Korea was accelerated by South Korean journalists, who collectively made him a newsworthy and prominent figure through news coverage. Following an intense stream of news covering Hines Ward, the South Korean media competitively featured him in a variety of programs beyond news; such as talk shows, entertainment shows, and documentaries. The South Korean media not only built nationalistic discourses around him, but also capitalized on his popularity in their programming in line with citizens' nationalistic responses. Furthermore, mediatization of Hines Ward went beyond the realm of traditional mass media channels, such as newspaper, television, and radio, extending social discourses about him to other types of media, such as the Internet, and reproducing his symbolic meanings and promotional values elsewhere.

Public fanaticism to Hines Ward and his mother is not showing a sign of decline at all. All kinds of imaginable eulogies, such as 'a Korean pride,' 'a true

Korean,' 'running with Korean spirit,' and 'eager to win for Korea,' are pouring out of the media and the Internet. (*Han-Kook Ilbo*, 2006, para. 5)

The dramatic story of Hines Ward and his mother is on a film-making. Pil-Ju Chung of CY Film, a movie production company, announced, "We made a contract with Hines Ward last summer and began developing a scenario." He continued, "Rather than highlighting Hines Ward's success story, this movie, temporarily titled 'My mother,' focuses on his Korean mother's perseverance and sacrifice that made him a Super Bowl hero." (*Se-Gye Ilbo*, 2008, para. 1)

Mediatization is inseparable from commodification, taking into account today's intimate interrelationship between media production of cultural meanings and commercial consumption of meaning-laden products (Cronin, 2004; Lines, 2000). Along the increasing intervention of the media and corporations in the sport industry, athletes with high media profiles and positive commercial appeal have been regarded as "a system of representation that is designed to make spectators consume commodities" (Rojek, 2006, p. 685). Sport celebrities, in that sense, are often deemed powerful spokespeople who mediate corporate producers and consumers and, thus, facilitate commercial exchanges between them (Smart, 2007).

It should come as no surprise, then, many South Korean corporations pursued Hines Ward—after he became a national sport celebrity through intense news coverage by South Korean journalists and subsequent mediatization in other domains—in the hopes of associating their products or services with his national popularity and public appeal. With his enhanced marketing and promotional values, commodification of Hines Ward was remarkably accelerated in South Korea.

Many domestic corporations are pitching into 'Hines Ward marketing.' First of all, Korean Air will get an opportunity to bring Hines Ward to South Korea. Then, Kia Motors' vehicles will await him at the airport. Cheil Industries will provide a number of suits that will be worn by him at banquets and ceremonies. Hines Ward and his mother will lodge in a royal suite of Lotte Hotel during their visit. (*Han-Kook Ilbo*, 2006, para. 2)

Korea Exchange Bank started airing a new commercial featuring Hines Ward, as soon as the soccer World Cup was over. Through Hines Ward, a world class athlete playing abroad, the bank attempts to appeal to nationalism and highlight its global image. (*Seoul Shinmun*, 2006, para. 7)

Public identification of Hines Ward as a Korean is another significant yet unique outcome and indicator of the Hines Ward syndrome. As stated earlier, the recognition and celebration of Hines Ward as a national sport hero, despite his hybrid national identity and foreign citizenship, exemplified how national identity is viewed and understood in contemporary South Korea. Reflecting

as well as leading this social shift, South Korean journalists framed Hines Ward as a Korean and highlighted his Korean identity in news stories. Citizens responded well to this mass-mediated identity of Hines Ward, embracing and celebrating him as a proud Korean son or brother. On balance, it appears that South Korean journalists as cultural intermediaries have helped Hines Ward obtain not only public consensus to be identified as a Korean sport celebrity playing abroad but sustainable marketing and promotional values with congruent national identity.

Hines Ward expressed his impression, "I am happy to be back. I am nervous yet excited to be back to the place I was born." He also said, "As a Korean-American, I have always believed my other half belongs to here. I hope I can learn a lot of Korean traditions later on." He continued expressing his boundless love to his mother, "It was tough for me to overcome contemptuous looks of people against me being a mixed-blood kid. But my mother who came from South Korea to the United States to nurture me has gone through even more adversities. I sincerely love and respect her." (*Moon-Wha Ilbo*, 2006, para. 4)

Hines Ward and his mother experienced severe discrimination in South Korea and he was even shunned by Koreans born and raised in the United States. He said, however, "I used to argue against them saying, 'You being born in the U.S. are less Korean than me being born in South Korea.'" 'Korean-African American' Hines Ward said, "I would be happy if I can help change the ways in which Koreans view and treat mixed-blood people, not by color of their skins but by who they are. I feel great since they accept me as a Korean now." He is a 'true Korean' son even more dutiful to his mother than 'pure blood' Koreans. He stated, "My mother has always said, 'Treat others as you want to be treated' and has taught me how to stay humble at all times. Now I am raising my son with such Korean custom and value." (*Moon-Wha Ilbo*, 2006, para. 3)

Discussion

Sport national identity is neither perpetually consistent nor inherently taken for granted, but is constantly reconsidered, rediscussed, and redefined within the context of the globalization of sport. To the extent that nation is simply a concept that embodies and concretizes political, social, and cultural communities constructed and shared by a certain group of people, national identity is subject to continuous negotiations and discourses in accordance with changing climates inside and outside of a nation. In that sense, national identity is constantly produced, reproduced, transformed, and destructed through discursive social interactions (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999).

Conceptualizing and defining nation, national identity, and citizenship in South Korea have been subject to

significant reconsideration and renegotiation in recent years, as a result of the nation's collective efforts to renovate itself in accordance with the global economy. The strong nationalism and strict national identity based on the conventional ideas of "pure Korean blood" and "unitary nation" have gradually eroded in South Korea. In addition, the nation's long preserved and maintained ethnic and racial homogeneity has been changing in line with increasing labor migrations and international marriages (Moon, 2000). Specifically, in relation to the globalization of sport, the case of Guus Hiddink signified how, and to what extent, growing sport migrations have transformed the concepts of nation and citizenship in South Korea. Along this vein, the case of Hines Ward discussed in this study exemplified a social shift in the ways in which national identity is interpreted and understood in association with increasing international marriages and mixed-blood Korean descendants. Although some defining elements, such as ethnicity, race, language, culture, history, and shared experiences, might remain essentially unchanged, meanings and implications of nation, national identity, and citizenship appear to be changed, revealing extended categorization and definition of what South Korea is and who South Koreans are in the face of globalization processes.

Without this fundamental social change in the ways in which nation, national identity, and citizenship are conceptualized and defined, the Hines Ward syndrome in South Korea might not have occurred in the first place. Once this social change was identified and recognized, it was local journalists who initiated and amplified public awareness of, and interest in, Hines Ward. They realized and appreciated the newsworthiness of Hines Ward in line with the changing public perceptions of nation, national identity, and citizenship. Framing his success story in nationalistic narratives and highlighting his Korean identity in news stories, South Korean journalists collectively drew and directed an amount of public attention to Hines Ward and, consequently, helped Hines Ward become a national sport celebrity. To a great extent, South Korean journalists played a key role as cultural intermediaries in introducing and connecting Hines Ward, a cross-national athlete playing abroad, to South Korean fans, thereby hinting at the global-local nexus of sport.

As cultural intermediaries, South Korean journalists produced and circulated symbolic and cultural meanings of Hines Ward and, hence, established his national identity, which seemed to be conducive to his marketing and promotional values at a local level. As reviewed earlier, Hines Ward was heavily mediatized and commodified in South Korea. Through the intense mediatization in a wide spectrum of the media ranging from television to the Internet, Hines Ward became a national sport celebrity with a high media profile and wide public recognition. The mediatization of Hines Ward, in turn, enhanced his marketing and promotional values and brought forth extensive commodification of him mainly through endorsements and appearances in a number of corporate sponsorships and commercials. In

addition to and along these mediatization and commodification processes, South Korean journalists as cultural intermediaries framed him as a Korean cross-national athlete and a national sport hero in news stories. As a result, public identification of Hines Ward as a Korean was continuously reinforced and solidified in line with South Koreans' nationalistic sentiment built and fostered around his mass-mediated identity.

This case study of Hines Ward in South Korea helps increase our understanding of complex, dynamic, and multitudinous representations and manifestations of nationalism and national identity in association with the globalization of sport. In essence, what made Hines Ward a national sport celebrity in South Korea is his Korean identity. However, he could have been merely recognized as an American or a half-Korean at best, and he might not have achieved such a celebrity status in South Korea, if it was not for the underlying social shift in the ways in which nation, national identity, and citizenship are conceptualized and defined in South Korea—extended nationalism and national identity. In other words, it is unlikely that the Hines Ward syndrome could take place, if strong ethnic nationalism and strict national identity determined by pure Korean blood were still prevalent in South Korea. The case of Hines Ward in South Korea reaffirms that sport national identity is discursively produced, reproduced, transformed, and sometimes destructed as a result of the globalization juggernaut that furthers deterritorialization and hybridization across national borders (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999).

The study also helps identify theoretically meaningful yet relatively underexplored and underdiscussed roles of local journalists as cultural intermediaries operating within the global-local nexus of sport. The role of cultural intermediaries, such as marketers, strategic communication practitioners, and media sport producers, who help interlink sport organizations, corporations, athletes, and sport fans with each other and promote interplays between global sport production and consumption has been frequently analyzed and discussed in previous studies. However, the role of local journalists, who report global sport events and news to local sport fans—often imaginatively visualizing spectacles and narratively symbolizing athletes, has been understudied. Given the context of South Korea, where citizens are not much interested in American football by and large and broadcast of the NFL games is very rare, the role of South Korean journalists as cultural intermediaries who mediated Hines Ward and local sport fans and rendered him a prominent public figure with exceptional marketing and promotional values is noteworthy: it only took less than three months for Hines Ward to achieve a status of national sport celebrity with the help of extensive news coverage. Behind the Hines Ward syndrome in South Korea, of course, firmly stood Hines Ward's Korean identity constructed and reproduced in the narratives of South Korean journalists as cultural intermediaries and South Koreans' nationalistic sentiment that resonated with the mass-mediated identity of Hines Ward.

Conclusion

The globalization of sport, particularly manifested by increasing sport migrations and international media sport productions, has facilitated continuous reconsideration and redefinition of sport identities around the world, which once were significantly bound within national territories. In such processes, the globalization of sport has resulted in the globalization of athletes to a certain degree. Some cross-national athletes have represented and exemplified the globalization with their global appeal and worldwide reputation. Indeed, they are outgrowths of the free trade of sport capital across national territories and the convergence of sport cultures around the world. In South Korea, Hines Ward is still a prominent sport figure who draws a lot of media and public attention even after many years. Moreover, the redefined and reconceptualized national identity, which was strongly pronounced by the case of Hines Ward, appears to be still stable and, even progressive, in South Korea, as demonstrated by the increasing number of mixed-blood professional athletes in the Korean Basketball League (KBL). The fact that some of them have been even playing for the national team more robustly evidences the modified concept and definition of national identity in South Korea.

Meanwhile, the role of local journalists as cultural intermediaries should not be overlooked. As the case of Hines Ward in South Korea shows, local journalists play a crucial role in the globalization of cross-national athletes by introducing them to local audiences. However, they also act as local gatekeepers by selectively highlighting and covering locally resonant features, such as national identity, in their media coverage, thereby facilitating the globalization of cross-national athletes. In that sense, local journalists effectively regulate and mediate the globalization and globalization of cross-national athletes at the global-local nexus.

Along this vein, the role of local journalists as cultural intermediaries between cross-national athletes and local sport fans identified in this study offers some noteworthy perspectives to global sport management practitioners. As South Korean journalists introduced Hines Ward to local audiences and produced and circulated some symbolic meanings for him in their media coverage, both globalization and globalization processes—demonstrated through mediatization, commodification, and identification—have occurred. This highlights the importance of more sophisticated local media relations in the global management and marketing of cross-national athletes. It should be also noted that global sport organizations attempting to explore local markets can benefit from cross-national athletes that appeal to local sport journalists and fans, as evidenced now in the Major League Baseball (MLB), where a great deal of marketing success in Latin American as well as Asian markets has been reported, due to many talented athletes migrating from those regions and subsequently increased regional/local media coverage and public interest.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to take their hats off to two anonymous reviewers and the past editor, Dr. Lucie Thibault, for their insightful critiques and suggestions. Without their excellent contribution, the paper would not have been in this current form. This study was supported by research grants from the Institute of Media Content (IMC), Dan-Kook University, South Korea.

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